The Warrior and the Intellect

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Summary: A 200 prompt tribute to Master Chief x Cortana and those who write it. Rated K to M, R&R.

1. Chapter 1

A/N: A tribute to all ChiefxCortana writers out there, regardless of how good or bad, but especially to Kavek, Heart-of-Memories, JustShotMarvin, XT-421, FuryanJedi13, Anakya Superion, and Spartan Ninja for their works involving this particular pairing. Hail the awesomeness!

* * *

><p>1. Mistake<p>

He'd always wondered if he was wrong to leave her behind, but he corrected that mistake when he rescued her from the Gravemind's clutches.

2. Need

She always wondered how to quantify the threshold for his statement, "Wake me when you need me;" though, she mused as she unsealed the tube holding her precious person, Doctor Halsey and the remaining Spartan popping up out of nowhere to rescue them certainly qualified as a "need."

3. Grumpy

After she got her synthetic body, everyone was surprised to find that it was Cortana who was the grumpy one in the morning, or at least they were until they found out what John had been doing to make her want to stay in bed.

4. Loud

Cortana had always known that it was not what you said but how loud you said it; they could probably hear her shrieks all the way to Sangheilios when she found out she was beign separated from the Chief.

5. Bitter

It was a bitter reunion, John thought as he gazed down at the shuddering construct on the holopanel; he had his scars, and now Cortana had her own.

6. Beginnings and Endings

The first time Cortana was in his head, John thought that he would never be warm again; the last time she left it, he believed he was going to burn alive for want of her cool presence.

7. Damaged

She was unsure of the time, the date, even her own name; she knew she was damaged so severely that she might not make it after all, but the sight of him standing over her was enough to soothe away all of the worries she had.

8. Picnic

Their first date was uncomfortable to say the least, especially considering that the other Spartans where trying (and failing) to be stealthy when they tailed the pair to the park for their picnic; Cortana was heard to ask the Chief if his siblings were trying to chaperone them or get blackmail to post on the Internet.

9. Awkward

When Lord Hood asked them why they were standing so close together, there was a moment of awkward silence before they reluctantly inched apart.

10. Unworthy

The Prophets of Truth, Mercy, and Regret had long thundered that humanity was unworthy of its heritage as the Reclaimers, but Cortana could never agree with them; how could someone as 'undeserving' as John be more noble than the Didact himself?

11. Neurosis

The Chief swore that the longer he was without Cortana the more neurotic he became; how else would one explain the "flickers" of her that kept appearing on his visor?

12. Beautiful

John was unable to stop himself from oh-so-gently brushing her cheek with just the tips of his callused fingers; she was so beautiful when she smiled at the touch.

13. Terrified

It was perfectly normal to be afraid of the dark, he'd told her, especially with all of the things she'd been through, but he would protect her; he was stunned to silence when she told him that it was not her that she was afraid for.

14. Children

There was a long debate going around in the Office of Naval Intelligence about whether or not they should require the remaining Spartans to have children; Paragosky said, "Fuck it," when John got married to his onboard AI.

15. Toasted

After seeing what several of the Marines did after getting toasted on contraband booze, John vowed to never touch the stuff.

16. Grudge

As he watched Reach burn, John was sure that he would never let go of the grudge he held for the murder of his siblings.

17. Forgiveness

The Chief was unsure exactly what he had done to make Cortana angry but he asked for forgiveness anyway; he later learned that it had all been a ploy to get him to use some of his vacation time.

18. Alone Together (by WakeyJakeyeggsnbakey on deviantart; I wanted to share this because it's perfect for them)

I have come so far
>I don't believe where we are,
or if we'll ever get home,
>stuck here forever,
alone, together,
>with only a bond that has grown,
deeper over time,
>I'm yours, you're mine,
but nothing can ever exist,
>you're a computer,
you can't have a suitor,
>and neither of us can resist,
this love that we share,
>we both know it's there,
and will never admit what we see,

>that is for the best;
but now I must rest,
>so wake me when you need me.<p>

19. Sick

She had always wondered why humans were so miserable when they were sick, but when John came down with a bout of pneumonia so severe it almost killed him, she understood.

20. Beloved

Cortana was not sure what was real and what wasn't after she descended into rampancy while they drifted in space, but lying curled up on silken sheets with John pressed against her back, calling her "Beloved," seemed almost to good to be true, and she sobbed aloud when it wasn't.

21. Repulsive

A more repulsive being Cortana had never met before she encountered

the Gravemind, and even with the Chief protecting her from it now, he still haunted her nightmares, holding John's disembodied head.

22. Ancient

The enemy and the devices meant to contain it are just as ancient as they are terrible, but that was never a problem for the two of them; they just needed to make a bigger "boom."

23. Touch

The first thing she ever touched was his face, and she began to cry when she realized that it was not just a dream.

24. Gentle

The others could not help but notice how gentle he was when he held her; he acted like she was made of glass, though she was far more durable than he was.

25. Kinky

John had never known that his AI had a kinky streak a light-year across, but he found out when he woke up with his hands handcuffed to their bed and a smirking Cortana hovering over him.

26. Formal

The sleeves were a little short, his shoes were one size too small, and he hated wearing all of his military decorations because there were so many it pulled him off balance, but the sight of Cortana in her silken sky-blue gown was enough to push all of the formalities to the background; she blushed and giggled when he told her she was beautiful.

27. Outside

Cortana's first time outside in her cybernetic body was an experience for all of them; she reminded them of a two year old with the way they were perpetually having to drag her away from somthing dangerous.

28. Anecdotes

His little AI will never cease to surprise him with all of the anecdotes she has at her disposal; it seems like she has at least one for _everything_.

29. Conspiracy

They never actually found the head of the conspiracy after John went after him; "_No one_ hurts my AI and gets away with it."

30. Trapped

Cortana likened her containment in Halo's Control Center to being a trapped animal; though Halo would do nothing to her, it was him she was worried about.

31. Power

'Power corrupts,' the rampant AI mused as she destroyed them, 'and absolute power corrupts absolutely, but' - an eerie grin lit her face when she turned her attention to the high security cell she'd tricked him into, watching as he futilely slammed his fists against the door, trying to escape her clutches - 'it rocks absolutely, too.'

32. Defiant

Neither of them had ever been ones to give up without a fight, but their stalemate with Paragosky was getting a little ridiculous; after the first attempt on her life, the Spartans were willing to concede that perhaps their defiance was a good thing.

33. Meeting

During the whole two-hour meeting, John did not once change his slightly-pained expression nor the blush on his face, but Cortana's appearance from under the table after everyone else had gone explained everything.

34. Sunlight

The sunlight filtering though the trees created dappled patterns over the forest floor, the creek, the rocks; Cortana was fascinated with it all, and John sat there with her for hours, just enjoying nature.

35. Fanfiction

"You know, I don't these people have lives at all, but I do like some of their ideas."

36. Dominant

Though the pair never said it outright and no one ever heard them, the Spartans could always tell who had been on top the night before.

37. Takeover

Needless to say, once the Chief got involved, all of the Insurrectionists attempting a takeover headed for the hills.

38. Fighting

The whole of his life had been nothing but fighting, shooting, and explosions, but it was even more blissfully ironic that the end of that war came about through a high speed chase and a jump into the _Dawn_'s cargo bay.

39. Lost

The day he lost her was the day he died inside.

40. Involuntary

Him calling her "love" was completely involuntary, a reflex now that they had been together for six months, but it blew their secret relationship completely out of the water.

41. Regret

"The message just repeats: Regret, Regret, Regret," and the words set chills down the Chief's spine as an eerie sense of deja vu swept over him.

42. Game

Naturally, Bungie asked them to be the beta testers when they made a video game about the Halo Campaign.

43. Traitor

John wondered when protecting his AI had made him a traitor to the UNSC.

44. Newcomer

He was just finished a battle in which he was outnumbered and outgunned when one of the communications officers came to tell him that he had a new daughter.

45. Asleep

She couldn't help but watch him while he slept and wonder if he was dreaming of her.

46. Frigid

The Spartans had never seen John act as cold to them as the day they were ordered to take Cortana away.

47. Addiction

During the last trimester of her pregnancy, Cortana developed an addiction to the penuche fudge that John made for her birthday, and though it left the kitchen an absolute mess, he gladly made enough fudge to feed the whole of the UNSC for years.

48. Protocol

It was the first time he disobeyed protocol when he was ordered to terminate Cortana; no one ever found them after they went AWOL.

49. Pet

John was not quite how she managed to weasel her way into getting them a pet, but at least she didn't pick a weasel; she chose the cutest of black kittens and made him blush when she told him that it reminded her of him: dangerous by word but still so cuddly.

50. Soaked

Even after he landed in the lake, he claimed that he never missed; he just was a little off sometimes.

51. Unusual

It was very unusual for any of the Spartans to go to bed before ten,

but tomorrow _was_ Cortana and John's wedding; they were asleep by nine-fifty nine.

52. Pressure

"They all look the same; which wire do I cut?"

53. Nervous

She had never seen him act so nervous before, and he was so jumpy and twitchy that eventually she had to ask what was wrong; it came as a shock to her when he got down on one knee and asked her to marry him.

54. Predatory

Her evil delighted look was absolutely predatory when she caught sight of him, and the Spartans began dying of laughter when they watched her start to stalk him all over the base like he was some kind of animal and she, the hunter.

55. Trust

Cortana knew that she could trust him with her life, but she still had the occasional doubt; he had told he to jump, but could he reach her in time?

56. Habit

Even though it had been years since he left the UNSC, it had long since become habit for him to get up at five thirty in the morning and not a moment later.

57. Holiday

Cortana was wild with rage when the remains of the Covenant interrupted her first Christmas holiday; John simply shook his head and went to put on his armor.

58. Falling

Falling in love was not something that Cortana had expected to do, but falling in love with a Spartan, one of Oni's emotionless automatons, was insanity.

59. Intelligent

She was the most intelligent computer program to date, but she still stuttered and blushed like a fool when he asked her out on a date.

60. Mother/Father

John decided that in lieu of asking a random person, he would go ask Doctor Halsey what he should do about his impending fatherhood.

61. Ambition

Her greatest ambition was to get married and live in a nice house for the rest of her life, and their daughter was just icing on the

cake.

62. Chained

The other Spartans would never forget the time they walked in on them and saw the Chief chained to their bed while in full armor.

63. Trek

Their trek across their own private planet took years, but they enjoyed every moment of it.

64. Grieving

No one knew how long he would grieve for her, but they were willing to give him as long as it took.

65. Repair

His armor was not the only thing in need of repairs.

66. Hungry

Even after they fled the persecution of the UNSC, Cortana never feared that they would go hungry; John was an excellent hunter.

67. Fuzzy

Her vision was fuzzy until she learned how to focus her new eyes, and his face was the first thing she saw, brow furrowed in concern.

68. Bet

Kelly became a lot richer after the Spartans caught John and Cortana kissing in the gardens.

69. Toy

John didn't know how Cortana had acquired the baby toys for their little girl (he had a sneaking suspicion that there was a receipt from Amazon lying around somewhere), but he had long ago learned not to question Cortana's methods.

70. Violent

The first assassin that came after her met a violent end at the hands of her protector; she slept on, unaware.

71. Stranger

The man that tried to lure her away from her Spartan wound up being a convicted serial killer; she was just lucky that John had recognized his face from a wanted poster.

72. Penance

He would spend an eternity in Purgatory if it meant that she would be okay.

73. Possession

His most prized possession was the AI cartridge that she used to inhabit, and he wore it on a chain around his neck so he would never have to let it go.

74. Cybernetic

Her state-of-the-art cybernetic body was fast enough to dodge bullets, strong enough to lift two tons, and agile enough to do a replay of _The Matrix_, but what he loved most was that her eyes were the exact same shade of brilliant electric blue that they had always been.

75. Morals

"It's kind of hard to obey societal rules when you were trained without morals."

76. Denied

When the Chief was denied the right to see Cortana, he was worried that something might have gone terribly wrong during the assessment procedure; when she walked out of the tech suite in her own synthetic body, it was all he could do to stop himself from sweeping her off her feet and never letting her go.

77. Captured

They never found all of the pieces of the Insurrectionists who had taken Cortana in the dead of night; all they knew was that the Chief had taken care of them.

78. Practice

Practice makes perfect, which was why she stayed out on the shooting range until well after dark, determined to pass the test that would let her join her Spartan on the battlefield.

79. Memory

For his sake as much as hers, they agreed to let her die naturally, even though it killed him to watch her waste away to the point where she couldn't even remember who he was.

80. Book

The book was calledâ€¦ something utterly unpronounceable but it was completely fascinating, and Cortana was able to do nothing but sit there and laugh while she watched him read it with the avidity of one who has just discovered something new.

81. Desperation

It was desperation that drove her on _High Charity_; she refused to die without seeing him one last time.

82. Bad

"No! Bad Spartan, BAD! I've told you not to bring live weapons or explosives into the house! Remember what happened last time?"

83. Dark

Even though _High Charity_ was lit with the glow of fires and sputtering glow-orbs, the darkness could not have been more oppressive.

84. Saved

She saved his neck on Alpha Halo by stopping him from firing the rings, so he saved her from the Gravemind's clutches.

85. Monotony

One could always rely upon Cortana to break the monotony of everyday life on a UNSC base.

86. Inside

With her inside his armor, he felt like there was nothing he couldn't do.

87. Shy

Cortana never thought she was capable of being shy, but the first time John introduced her to the rest of the Spartans as his girlfriend laid that to rest.

88. Finally

They had finally gotten home, finally settled into their new home, finally gotten a chance to relax â€“ and then the remaining Covenant barged in and ruined the moment.

89. Empty

The whole time she was on _High Charity_, his armor had never felt emptier.

90. Disagreement

The fact that they had had their first lovers' spat came as no surprise to anyone, but the fact that they had been arguing over whose desk they should "break in" next made everyone do a facepalm.

91. Happy

Cortana thought that the happiest day of her life was when John asked her to marry him, but that was until she brought their beautiful baby girl into the world.

92. Develop

By the time the pair had gotten back to Earth, there had been a breakthrough in cybertechnology, and Cortana was quite glad to volunteer to be one of the first AI implanted in a fully synthetic body.

93. Learn

"And they say old dogs can't learn new tricks."

94. Again

When Cortana found out that she was pregnant - again - she promptly whacked her husband upside the head, an exasperated expression on her face.

95. Purr

He was sleeping in his easy chair like a typical man, their black cat also asleep on his lap, purring so loud that she could be heard across the room.

96. Elegant

It was obvious to her that he was not comfortable in all of the elegance of the formal ball, so she hauled him away with the other Spartans for a round of paintball capture the flag â€“ while still in their formal gear.

97. Bear

"He's like aâ€¦ tinfoil-wrapped teddy bear; tough on the outside, but he's soft inside."

98. Tiny

Her holographic form was normally so tiny; it came as a shock to see her taller than he was in the Control Room.

99. Brilliant

Cortana's brilliance surpassed even that of her mother's, especially when she successfully outwitted ONI's top AI one after another, and even Halsey was forced to admit defeat.

100. Tired

When it was finally all over, the Warrior and the Intellect both passed away in their sleep, weary from an extraordinarily long lifetime.

* * *

><p>AN: If I need to get over a writer's block, I may write more of these.

2. Chapter 2

A/N: Yay, moar! An early Christmas present to you all - or for whatever holiday you claim.

* * *

><p>101. First Kiss<p>

It certainly wasn't when or where Cortana expected it to be, but the

simultaneous passion and tenderness made the blood-stained battlefield fade into the background.

102. Long Distance

Distance was hell on some relationships, especially when the couple in question was a smart AI on Earth being studied for further data on metastability and the other was a SPARTAN-II super soldier fighting evil alien parasites scores of light years away, but they swore that they would make their relationship work even if it killed them.

103. Wait, what?

It was impossible for the Spartan _not_ to say it when the Chief told them in passing, "Oh, by the way, Cortana and I are getting married."

104. Crash

Their impact on the unknown planet wasn't so much a landing as it was a crash, leaving displays and glass panels shattered, metal bulkheads warped and punctured, and tools and gear strewn everywhere about the aft end of the _Dawn_, but both of them were alive, if a little worse for wear.

105. Dim

The dim lighting of the ship gave in a slightly ominous feel, but the Spartans were utterly at home on the Flood-infested ship, gunning down the parasitic life forms even in zero-gee.

106. Futile

It was the cheesiest line ever used and reused, but the Spartan still couldn't resist shouting, "Resistance is futile!" when the Grunts began running about in terror.

107. Erratic

Cortana's mood swings were more erratic than the weather on a non-terraformed planet after she went rampant, but John had almost limitless amounts of patience.

108. Loved

John knew that Cortana loved him, and she knew that he loved her even if neither said it outright; it was the little things that they did for one another that showed the depth of their affection.

109. Soft

The flower petals were so delicate beneath her fingers that she was afraid too soft a touch and she wouldn't be able to feel them, but too hard and it would damage the flower; John gave her dozens of them for her to experiment with in any manner she pleased.

110. Hold On

"Don't let go!" John shouted to her, his grip tight on her wrists as the floor dropped away beneath her, leaving her dangling out over the

canyon miles below, "Don't you dare let go!"

111. Shackles

She willingly bound herself to him for all eternity.

112. Broken

John had been so worried about the state Cortana would be in when he came back for her, especially after he found out that the Gravemind was on _High Charity_; seeing her so broken on the holopedestal sparked an unbelievable amount of rage inside of him that demanded an outlet.

113. Precious

Even a decade after her death, she was still his most precious person.

114. Odds and Ends

John was not sure what he was expecting to find in the little knickknack shop he walked into on that one side street, but he was suitably satisfied when he walked out with a record that completed his impressive collection and a date with the pretty girl with intense blue eyes working the register.

115. Tea

It was a special blend that the Didact made especially for him, and if anyone else tried to drink it - even her - it almost put them into comas, it made them so relaxed.

116. Twisted

After seven years on her own in the eternal void of space, her processing strings should have been so snarled and tangled that she had been unable to think; Dr. Halsey was not quite sure as to why she was not at all surprised to find that Cortana was perfectly functional after all these years.

117. Echo

Even after all these years alone, he could still hear her voice echoing inside his head.

118. Soothe

His siblings were long gone, and he still had nightmares about their deaths, but a single touch from her was enough to soothe all of his worries away.

119. Fight

They finished it.

120. Naked

It wasn't the first time she had seen him bare as the day he was born, but it still brought a blush to her cheeks and a fervent thank

you to whatever deity had made her lucky enough to get him for a husband.

121. Push

"C'mon, Cortana, you can do it! Push!" "JOHN! I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!"

122. Alive

She fought feverishly against the shaking of her hands, performing the systematic compressions and assisted breathing without stopping, trying to get his heart beating again - and then he gasped in precious air, and she was so glad that he was alive that she forgot her threats about killing him for dying on her.

123. New

All of the sensations her body gave her were completely and utterly new; it was as if all of them were seeing the world with fresh eyes - through her eyes.

124. Born

It would never fail to make them laugh so hard they cried; they were "born" on the exact same day.

125. Low

John could honestly admit to Cortana that he had never been anywhere in temperatures this low, but being able to see the ancient and abandoned Forerunner city coated in ice and snow like the mythical City of Ice was well worth the three hours it took for him to get warm again.

126. Devious

It described her perfectly, especially when she was in one of her moods.

127. Isolation

Almost a decade of isolation on the _Forward Unto Dawn_ had not been kind to Cortana; she was just this side of total system failure when the UNSC finally came for them.

128. Starve

His stomach had stopped voicing its emptiness a long time ago, not because he wasn't hungry, but because all things go silent in the end; he barely had enough energy left to care, much less go search for food on the dying home of the humans, and they sat there until starvation took him.

129. Breakable

It was so hard to remember that now he was more breakable than her.

130. Winter

It was the first time Cortana had seen snow with her own eyes, and the first thing she did was gather it up and throw a snowball at her Spartan, even though she should have known better; after almost three hours of rapid-fire throwing, she finally conceded defeat.

131. Ignore

John had always known that it was impossible to ignore Cortana when she wanted you to pay attention to her, so when she popped up on the holopad in his room, he immediately stopped what he was doing and sat down to listen to her rant about ONI.

132. Color

Her holoform had all of the colors present in the sky at midday, from the darker blues directly overhead to the pale sky blue towards the horizon.

133. Chocolate

"If sex was food, it'd be chocolate." "Does that mean that if you were food, you'd be chocolate because you're sexy?"

134. Civil

Up until their hormones hit, the two teens were unable to be more than civil to one another; it came as a surprise to _everyone_ when John asked for permission to marry Cortana before he went into the military.

135. Random

"I've never been to China." "...Where in all the blazes did that come from?"

136. Reach

It was their home, and it was no more.

137. Difficult

People found it unbelievably difficult to accept the fact that the "Chief-and-Cortana" were actually two separate people.

138. Heat

In Cortana's humble opinion, they were mankind's greatest inventions: portable, battery-powered heaters and electric blankets.

139. Veneer

After she got her synthetic body, the thin veneer of conduct that prevented him from falling completely and utterly in love with her fell by the wayside.

140. Fall

It was Cortana's favorite time of year because she got to see the leaves change, and it never, ever failed to fascinate her.

141. Nightmare

They were nonexistent so long as she was there.

142. Contagious

They both hated contagious diseases; it started with Cortana getting the chicken pox because the Doctor had never had them, and then John got infected because _he_ had never had them, and everything went down hill from there.

143. Good

"But what if I've been so very _baaaad_?"

144. Goodbye

He had never wanted to say it, but the passage of time eventually dragged it out of him.

145. Scar

His body was covered in them, and she knew where each and every one had come from.

146. Last Dance

Their last dance happened eight hours before he died on the operating table after a battle.

147. Burn

The planet was burning, falling to pieces around them, but they were still fighting with every ounce of their power to save it.

148. Steady

His aim and trigger finger never once faltered.

149. Monster

"I? I am a monument to all your sins."

150. Home

It goes without saying that it would only be where the other was.

151. Garbage

John almost - almost wasn't able to stop his hand from ging for his sidearm when Paragosky said it was time to "take out the trash."

152. Camping

He had never been camping for peaceful means, and she had never been at all, but they muddled through their first trip together.

153. Halt

They were the unstoppable force, the immovable object, and humanity's first and last lines of defense.

154. Grave

Each and every day, without fail, there was at least one fresh red, red rose resting before the headstone.

155. Machine

If all seventy-five of them were the gears of a machine of destruction, then she was the oil that kept them running smoothly.

156. Destination

Neither of them were real clear on their destination, but they would get there when they got there.

157. Nowhere

They were in the middle of nowhere, on a planet that probably wasn't even inhabited, but they were together again, and that was what mattered.

158. Garden

They weren't quite sure if it was Eden, but it was close enough for them.

159. I Know

"I love you." "Silly, I already knew that."

160. Dust

She was still there, even after he had died - dust unto dust - but every time they saw her, every time she looked in a mirror, she was reminded of his sacrifice.

161. Dream

It had always been a dream of hers, to become a human, so she wasn't quite sure why it had shocked her so much for Lord Hood to offer the opportunity.

162. Destiny

Sometimes he wondered if it was destiny for him to be so lucky; he had managed to get a date with a woman so far out of his league it was unbelievable, managed to get her to say yes to marrying him, and grown old with her, watching their children and grandchildren play in the front yard - "Not bad for a military grunt and a princess."

163. Spring

The leaves were green, the sky was clear, and the lot of them got into a fight with the mud created by the spring rains.

164. Sigh

She sighed in her sleep and shifted closer to him.

165. Fingertips

She absolutely _hated_ the fact that the fingertips were the most sensitive part of the human body, and she knew that he knew it because he was smirking sinisterly as he licked the icing off of her fingers one by one.

166. Waiting

It was agony, sitting outside the hospital room with their son and daughter, waiting for news but the moment the doctors said that it was all going to be okay, Jacob darted into the room to see his mother and new baby sister, his father trailing behind and smiling.

167. Playboy

Sheerly by nature, John could never be one.

168. Revenge

Paragosky had taken it upon herself to "arrange" for an "accident" while John was on his mission, and the moment Cortana received word, she began planning a little revenge.

169. July

The fireworks were so beautiful.

170. Desire

It was swift and capricious, which would probably explain why John's fist clenched around the water bottle in his hand at the sight of some Marines hitting on _his_ very uncomfortable-looking Cortana.

171. Free

"But there is no such thing as a free lunch, John-" "Just shut up and enjoy it, Cortana."

172. Celebration

The fireworks outside were wrapping up the anniversary of the defeat of the Covenant, but the fireworks inside were only just beginning.

173. Stars

She lost count of how many times she'd just looked up and thought that the stars would be prettier if she had real eyes to see them with.

174. Morgue

She couldn't bear to go to the morgue to identify the body; she didn't want to see the love of her life lying so cold and still on the steel table.

175. Space

It was one of the most desolate and most beautiful places they had ever seen.

176. White

The color of his skin after spending so much time inside his MJOLNIR armor, but she was determined to change that.

177. Alone

The one thing he would never be, not with her inside his armor and inside his mind.

178. Coma

The doctors had been forced to put him in a medically-induced coma to save his life, but he refused to wake when he was in the clear; Cortana was the only person who remained by his side for the fifteen years it took for him to claw his way out of the darkness.

179. Leave

The one thing they couldn't do to the other.

180. Visit

It was the one that no military wife wanted to receive, and it just so happened to be on her birthday.

181. Music

Not everyone knew that John knew how to play piano, but every year, without fail, he would wind up being the one to provide the music for the Spartans' Christmas party.

182. Silence

The silence inside his head was deafening after she had gone; it made him want her back all the more.

183. Cards

He hated sending them out at Christmas time - "Why should we bother? We both see these people practically every day!" - but she made it fun by buying two rolls of stamps more than necessary and having a war to see who could stick the other with the most stamps in the shortest amount of time.

184. Emblem

She was his calling card.

185. Equal

For all of the fact that she was technically his superior, Cortana never actually ordered him to do anything; she said that they were equals, and that was the way it was going to stay.

186. Monopoly

The other Spartans were not at all surprised to find that John's absences had been a result of Cortana monopolizing his time to serve as her personal chauffeur.

187. Reality

The AI had long since lost her grip on reality, but they kept her alive anyway; she was still the best at what she did.

188. Serenity

It was impossible with the Spartans on-base.

189. Bone

The explosion had shattered almost every bone in his body, and the doctors said that he would never walk again; the luckiest Spartan shocked everyone but her when he resumed active duty four years later.

190. Chalk Dust

He walked into their bedroom, tracking it in behind him, and growled, "Don't say a word."

191. Manuscript

Their story had been cleverly disguised as an archaic romance novel, but the moment Cortana began reading it, she recognized it for what it was and couldn't stop herself from smiling.

192. Ink

His body was liberally splattered in it from all the bombs that he had been forced to set off during the training exercise, and Cortana laughed and laughed and laughed until she couldn't even breathe.

193. Perfection

There was no such thing, but in his eyes, she was as close as the "lowly mortals" were ever going to get.

194. Ring

The ring was just a simple golden band with a speckling of tiny diamonds around it, all he could afford to get her, but with the way she reacted to it, you would have thought that he'd given her the Hope Diamond.

195. Drive

No matter how far, they would drive until they kicked their enemies' asses.

196. Missing

She had been missing for six years, but he would know her anywhere.

197. Full Moon

"Are you absolutely sure you're not a werewolf?"

198. New Direction

"It's that way, John, _that way_! Augh, you missed the turn _again_!"

199. Immortal

Logically, John knew that nothing was immune to death, so he wondered why he was so shocked when Cortana passed away suddenly.

200. Sway

His words held a lot of sway with the populace, but it came as a surprise to everyone but those who knew him well when he declined a political position in the New Covenant.

End
file.